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Samuel R. Mitchell

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AT THE OPENING OF THE

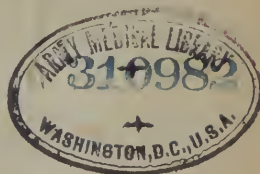
MEDICAL COLLEGE,

IN CHARLESTON, (S. C.)

ON MONDAY, THE 13TH OF NOVEMBER, 1826.

By STEPHEN ELLIOTT, LL. D.

Professor of Natural History.



CHARLESTON:


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 THIS ADDRESS was delivered at the opening of the
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ADDRESS.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN OF THE MEDICAL COLLEGE.

I REJOICE as a member of the Faculty of this College to meet you under circumstances which promise to render our exertions more successful, your application more satisfactory and beneficial. Public liberality has not only enabled us to construct an edifice adapted to the course of studies you have engaged to pursue, but to provide the apparatus necessary for those studies ; to furnish the preparations, the specimens calculated to exhibit advantageously, wherever illustration may be necessary, the facts, the principles, the doctrines we wish to inculcate or unfold.

I rejoice yet more as a citizen of Carolina, to see this institution, even in its infancy, rising to usefulness and to reputation ; destined, as I fondly trust, not to stand alone, but to form one of a series of similar establishments consecrated to instruction and qualified to assume a name and a station among the Literary Schools of our common country, and to remove from the South the disabilities and the reproach under which it has too long laboured.

Among the opinions, I may better call them delusions, which for a long time prevailed in Carolina, and contributed to retard the progress of our improvement ; one prominent and singular, one strongly inculcated and extensively believed, was that our children could not, I think I may add

ought not to be educated at home. We were exhorted and persuaded to send them from parental care and parental guidance, because our climate was unfriendly to health and unfavourable to study ; because the habits acquired by youth were idle, if not dissolute, unfitting them for future exertions and future usefulness ; and because by a residence abroad and a free intercourse with the inhabitants of other countries, local prejudices would be eradicated, liberal opinions acquired, and a harmony of feeling would be promoted, if not with distant nations, at least with different sections of our own country.

It is not difficult to appreciate the fatal influence of such opinions on our domestic improvements. Instead of creating and establishing institutions for instruction at home, we were labouring to provide funds for the endowment of those which were abroad. Instead of cherishing and promoting such as casually arose among ourselves, our solicitude was chiefly excited about the condition and welfare of those which to us were foreign. The Schools of other lands were to us the objects of almost undivided attention. Can we wonder that under such impressions the system of education was with us imperfect—its improvements slow—and that the bright progress of the present age has been to us like a phantasm seen obscurely and afar off.

The mist is now slowly dissolving ; but are there no remnants of the cloud yet hovering around us ? No vestige of our former error—no reason to suspect that it may not be superfluous even at the present moment to review ancient opinions, and examine the accuracy of our early impressions ?

“ Our climate is unfriendly to health ;” but if this is the climate in which our children are born and to be born, in which they are finally to live, why should they be estranged from its influence, and be exposed by this very measure to suffer from its peculiarities. If our country is not fit for the habitation of civilized man abandon it at once. If it is to

be the abode of our children, render it as far as our means permit, not only suitable for their future residence but for their nurture and education. Give to it all those improvements which will adapt it not only to social and rational intercourse, but to intellectual pursuits. Make it, for you have the power to make it, the land of science as well as of courtesy and honour, the land of the arts as well as the home of patriotism and virtue.

“Our climate is unfavourable to study.” If this is asserted in relation to physical influence, we should unhesitatingly deny the assertion. For independently of the short duration of violent heat in our climate, which renders the objection in itself trivial, no child to whom such difficulties had not been suggested, has ever been known to make the relaxing effects of summer a serious obstacle to study. Turn him who objects out to play, and mark what becomes of the appalling power of heat. All who attend to the employments of childhood and youth know, that the efforts of parents are generally required to prevent excessive exposure, and if our summers are not too oppressive for active and violent exertion, can they obstruct or incommode silent and sedentary employments?

If this assertion is made with relation to moral influence, it mingles with the next objection, that the habits acquired by youth, are idle, if not dissolute, unfitting them for future exertion or future usefulness, and merits more serious consideration, than on this occasion can be allotted to such a discussion. It may be sufficient now to remark, that the habits to which these allusions are made, are evils not of climate, but of a particular stage or class of society. A class to be found in all climates and under all governments. Ask in all countries, in all ages, what are and have been (I speak of course, generally) the habits of those who, born to hereditary property, to the expectation or possession of wealth, have been nursed in the lap of indulgence, trained to luxury and

enjoyment? Ask of our parent land, if climate is necessary to rear up a tribe of idle, extravagant or profligate young men? Can a change of place, or scene, or manners, efface the impressions of infancy and early youth? Can a residence among those who are compelled to labour for their daily bread, inspire habits of industry among such as have never felt the same necessity? Tell him who is brought up amidst scenes of luxury, amidst the constant exhibitions of wealth, that he in time will have to labour for his future maintenance, even if it should be acknowledged as a speculative truth, he will feel it a remote, perhaps uncertain and improbable contingency. And it is under such circumstances, that the habits of many of our youth have been formed, and that we impute to climate effects, which have been produced by our own manners and state of society; a state of society, let me add, productive of many virtues, even if attended with some inconveniences. To form and establish habits of severe and laborious industry in youth, it is, perhaps, an indispensable condition, that they should from infancy, believe labour their inevitable allotment.

Has experience justified our ancient opinions? Have those whose habits were idle and inconsiderate, whose dispositions were unruly, whose propensities were evil, been reformed by mere change of scene or of society? We have rather cause for gratulation that of those who have been sent abroad, so many have escaped from the temptations to which they have been exposed, and the uncontrolled liberty in which they have been indulged. Where can the youth of our country be sent, for examples of those qualities that are more excellent than knowledge itself, for integrity, for love of truth, of honor, and of virtue, for pure and elevated principles, rather than to their paternal homes? Nothing then is wanting, but that we should give at home to our offspring the same opportunities, the same inducements which they can receive abroad. It cannot be necessary to recall the names of our country-

men, who even with the imperfect advantages our country formerly afforded, have become distinguished in the history of our nation, nor of those who under better auspices are now rising to renown.

If our children are to be sent abroad to liberate them from local prejudices, to promote a liberal and harmonious intercourse between different parts of our country; it is sufficient to say, that it will be time enough to devote ourselves to this work, when the effort shall be reciprocal, when we shall hail young persons from different and distant parts of our country, sent here for education on similar principles. Let us not sacrifice too much to unimportant or questionable objects.

What then has been the past opinion, we may perhaps correctly call it, the custom of the land. Our fathers were invited to this country, or in the language of our aborigines, found themselves in it. As in the olden times, they married and were given in marriage. No interdict was here imposed. Children were born and nursed, and reared through the period of infancy. The full grown man might even return to his home, and be intrusted with his conduct and his life. But there was one fated period, one term of spell and charm, when home was a forbidden haunt. Children were sent abroad to learn industry by lessons that did not reach them; habits of control and self-government, by being liberated from all restraint; virtue and wisdom, and honor from exemplars selected at their own discretion. Greatly, I repeat it, greatly may we rejoice, that the evil has not been more heavy; that native integrity, good sense, I may even add, pride of character have preserved so many from unmitigated ruin.

May we not then inquire, what remains to be done to give at home to our children, the advantages they can enjoy in foreign climes, to give to our country improvements she has a right to claim from our hands.

In the Eastern hemisphere, among those nations from whom we derive our science as well as our descent, under forms of government, for the most part widely differing from our own, the establishments for instruction have depended sometimes on the pride or vanity, sometimes on the good sense and benevolence of a monarch, sometimes on the contributions of societies, more frequently on the liberality of individuals. Yet it has happened that from the operation of some of these causes, admirable results have been accomplished. In many parts of Europe, states and principalities, which in our union would scarcely form a county or a district in one of our States, have founded and endowed schools and universities, upon plans of the most extended usefulness, of wonderful magnificence; provided them with professorships, where every branch of human science can be taught; furnished them with libraries, where every record of human wisdom can be consulted; scattered temptations that might lead the noble and the opulent to acquire knowledge; offered facilities and opportunities by which even the poor and the humble might obtain instruction. And if these things are done even in countries where the administration of government does not depend on popular wisdom or on the popular voice, how important is it to us where every movement is regulated by public opinion, that that opinion should be disciplined, instructed, enlightened. In monarchies, universal instruction may be valuable as it adds to the reputation of the country and dignifies the national character. But in republics education is essential. It is the living principle which, diffused through the system, gives animation to the frame; it is rather the rational principle imparting a healthful action to that energy which might otherwise destroy; giving correct and regulated impulses to that native intelligence which unenlightened might be misled, and beguiled even by its own goodness; which, unguided, might by its power accelerate its own ruin. In Republics, therefore, education should not.

be permitted to depend on the liberality or caprice of individuals. And I mean education in its most extended sense. It is not only the interest, it is the duty of the government to provide for its diffusion. The children of the country are its bright inheritance, those on whom the mantle of power must descend, and every provision which parental care would make for the future welfare of its offspring, a free people should provide for those who are to direct the councils, and by their wisdom or their folly, by their wickedness or their virtue, to perpetuate or subvert the liberties and the happiness of their country. The wealth of the community is in the hands of the government, and on what objects can it be more usefully, more nobly employed, than in efforts to render those who are to wield the destinies of a great people, worthy of the trust, worthy of their high calling.

If we were disposed to appeal to motives less dignified, we might remark, that in no other mode than by public appropriations can the contributions of the citizens for that which being a common benefit ought to be a common burthen, if burthen it can be called, be rendered fair and equal. If the wealthy in their taxes contribute more to this fund than the poor, they will remember that the very property from which this tax is raised, is to be guarded and secured by the individuals whom they assist to educate. That more than fortune, that the lives and liberties of all most dear to them, depend on the talents, the wisdom, the moral principles of those who successively enter on the stage of active life. Why then should objects so important be left to individual impulse or discretion? Why left to those voluntary contributions which tax heavily the generous, the high minded, the just, and permit the sordid, even if abounding in wealth, to shrink from each appeal, and to assert, at least to think, that they can take care of themselves and of their own riches. No position, if it were worthy of examination, can be more fallacious. The wealth, of which these calculators boast, was acquired under the laws

they are called upon to support, is preserved and protected by the government they are exhorted to maintain and perpetuate. But these appeals are altogether wrong. Education should be the business, the care—should occupy the unceasing attention of the State ; and every expenditure necessary for its attainment in its most perfect forms, should flow from the general wealth.

If it were permitted us to smile at the wonderful hallucinations of the human mind, smiles would be excited by the opinions and conduct of our countrymen on this very subject. The wealthy who really furnish the funds of the nation, rarely object even to the most liberal appropriation for public instruction, they promote them, sanction them with their names and with their influence, and it is to those whose contributions are really and comparatively small, that the great doctrines of public economy are successfully applied. We must give to these economists the praise they merit ; they certainly are disinterested, for it is to them that these great foundations are all important. The wealthy may send their children abroad wherever the opportunities of education are most advantageously afforded. They may bring education to their homes, for the means of instruction can always be purchased. But to the indigent who have large families to educate, how greatly desirable is it that opportunities for acquiring knowledge, not the mere elements of learning, but all that can be communicated from man to man, should be placed within their reach ; that those, whatever be their station, whose talents, whose temperament, whose inclination, whose industry lead to the pursuit of letters, and of that influence and power which are the almost inseparable concomitants of knowledge, might find the paths of greatness open to their view, might hear the voice of glory echoing around their humble cots.

Let me not be supposed to undervalue public economy. I know its necessity. I know its influence. But it then only is

a virtue when applied to its proper objects. I seek not, I wish not to build up fortunes for individuals at the public expense; to raise up a train of idle retainers around the footstool of government; to create, as under old systems, the long catalogue of those who consume much and do nothing; but to apply the wealth of the country to the most ennobling uses. The indiscriminate saving of money is neither wisdom nor economy. There are objects more valuable than wealth. There are cases where expenditure itself is economy. How wise would be the conduct of that commander who, when a fortress was about to be besieged, should provide neither ammunition nor provisions, lest they should cost money. How wise would be the conduct of that government which should neglect to provide those advantages the improvements of the age afford; which should neglect to place its country in science or in arts, in peace as well as in war, upon an equality with all surrounding, or with all rival nations. Measures, however purely pacific or intellectual—measures calculated to enrol our citizens among the ameliorators and benefactors of human society, among those who have improved and elevated the human mind, seem generally to be the objects of vigilance and suspicion, cautiously investigated, slowly adopted. How readily have millions been lavished by almost every nation, every form of government, to desolate and destroy. How reluctantly have thousands, we might say hundreds, been given to secure those acquisitions far more important than foreign conquests or military triumphs, those principles which can alone render conquest or triumph of any value.

For what creates national happiness? What constitutes national glory? Is it the mere exertion of physical force, the struggles of the animal man, the waste of human life? Alas! if these are the elements of glory, what family of the savage Indian, what horde of the wandering Tartar, what tribe of the children of Ishmael, what kraal or village of the

Hottentot or the Ethiop, would not be illumined by its beams? Where has man been found, and his attendant spirits have not been disorderly, rapacious, uncontrollable? Where has man been found, and permitted regulated passions, tempered ambition and intellectual dictates to guide his footsteps? And yet it is only in proportion as those powers which distinguish him from the rest of the animal creation are exercised that he manifests his high station, that he assumes the rank allotted to him in the scale of creation. It is rational not physical man that guides, and governs, and elevates, and dignifies the human race. It is rational not physical man that aspires to Heaven.

It was not Salamis, it was not Marathon or Plataea that has perpetuated the name of Athens. What were the conquests or victories of republican Greece, to those of Attila, or Gengis, or Timour? It was that illustrious race whom she reared in or attracted to her schools, her temples, her academic groves, those who gave to immortality the breathings of poetry, the speculations of philosophy, the martial deeds themselves of their ancestors and compatriots; sages who extended the powers of the human intellect, and threw a shadowy yet enduring halo of glory around their country that endears her name, her language, her fortunes even to the present hour.

How greatly then should we feel indebted to those who, having the means, almost the destinies of the nation under their control, with true patriotism and wise economy, unvindictful of local or temporary feelings, give to their country those institutions necessary for the intellectual improvement of her citizens; give to the rising generation those advantages which may make them worthy of their country. These are benefactions which posterity shall acknowledge. These are acts which will give to national character that lustre which no other services can bestow; will give to patriotism those motives for inculcating the love of country, which patriotism

may be proud to employ. How dignified among the petty and the party squabbles of a day, stand those measures which look to the permanent prosperity and glory of a country. How many of the important trifles of an hour will be forgotten, when the votes which established this institution shall be recalled and honoured, and its creators ranked among the benefactors of the age.

Let it not be said that we are dwelling too much on truths obvious, recognized, and already reduced to practice. It is to be feared that these truths are acknowledged, not felt. That they receive a reluctant acquiescence, not a spontaneous, animated, fervent assent. We have acted and still act as if rather fearful of doing too much, than anxiously solicitous to leave nothing undone. We know not, and therefore do not feel our great inferiority to the nations of Europe in our literary and scientific establishments. We have no adequate conception of the means which exist among the enlightened people of that continent to promote a taste for intellectual pursuits among the young, and to assist and facilitate the labours of those who are already engaged in similar occupations. Who is there in this country, I speak more particularly of our section of the United States, that can pursue any branch of almost any science and feel himself upon a level with the state of improvement in Europe? We scarcely live with the century that has gone by. We stand around this great arena of human enterprize and mental exertion rather as spectators than as actors. We gaze on the efforts of the wise and the learned, but mingle not in their labours. We learn from time to time the result of their researches, without seeing the machinery with which they act or the progress of their investigations. We trust to the scraps and digests of magazines and reviews for the statement of their discoveries. If in the mechanic arts the ingenuity of our countrymen, if in legislation and in commerce the unrivalled freedom of our institutions have given us a high rank and a

distinguished name among nations—it would show that the talent of our country only wants opportunity and the means of action to become equally illustrious in the higher walks of science. But there are discouragements that still overshadow and repress literary and scientific researches in our land.

If we are told that our own State has done much, we acknowledge the fact, we feel that comparatively we have reason to boast of her liberal exertions, we hope that they will cause a brighter day to dawn on the generations which are to come. But we are guilty of no injustice when we say that much remains to be done. What are our establishments compared, not with those of the great empires of Europe, but with those of some of the petty principalities of Germany, with Gottingen with her seventy professors, public and private, and a library which several years ago contained 200,000 volumes, and had funds provided to add annually to her treasures whatever the science of the world unfolds? with Jena, with Halle, with Wittemburg, with Leipsic, with Tubingen, with Heidelberg, and many other institutions besides the great establishments of Prussia, Bavaria and Austria? institutions scattered over that country in every direction at intervals of sixty, eighty or ninety miles, and prepared to instruct at a moderate expense from three hundred to one, or even two thousand students. If it be said that Germany is far more populous than our Southern States, we reply that the disproportion in population or wealth is by no means in a ratio with the disproportion in our literary establishments, and that in a district of country in the South larger than Germany itself, we have no one place of education that can, I fear, compare in its means of instruction even with the least of her celebrated schools. Let it not then be said that we have done enough.

Neither let it be said that these aids have not hitherto been required to raise up illustrious men who have exalted the

character of the land that gave them birth, and whom that land now remembers with gratitude and respect. Let not solitary examples of moral greatness deceive us. Even if uncommon minds, if transcendent talents can sometimes pierce through the darkness with which ignorance and neglect, and perhaps poverty have enshrouded them; if they sometimes burst upon an admiring or an astonished world, awing, overpowering, consuming, these are not the exhibitions of genius we require. Even if these portentous visions prove beneficent, they suit us not. Their example is illusive, it misleads mankind. It is not the meteor fire glaring through our atmosphere, we wish to see, but a steady and enduring light. We want not in our system a sun dazzling and obscuring all lesser orbs by its refulgence, but a diffusion of similar and nearly equal luminaries; like the bright firmament of night, where although one star may differ from another star in glory, yet no one beams with overpowering lustre—no one conceals the order and regularity of the system—no one interrupts or disturbs the harmony of the scene.

Yet even in other respects these examples are deceptive. For it is only or principally in those cases where man is to be controlled and governed, in those cases where mental energy and sagacity must be promptly and vigorously exercised, that untried and untrained talents have been developed. And no one doubts that their effects would have been greater, their influence more beneficial, if their sphere of observation had been more extended, if such minds had been permitted to enlarge and correct their own views by the example and the recorded wisdom of kindred spirits. But in knowledge which consists in the accumulation of observations, opinions, and facts, who can travel through the maze of science unaided and alone? Who can dispense with the labours of those who have preceded him? Who could

take up as an unknown, unstudied work, the great volume of nature and acquire in the term of human life, even our imperfect readings? What strength of mind, what sagacity, can compensate the want of collateral assistance? What architect can build without materials? The time, the talents of thousands, have for ages been devoted to science; we should be acquainted with all of their discoveries, we should be placed on the same elevated level with our cotemporaries, before we can join advantageously or fairly in their efforts, and become companions in their triumphs; before we can accurately determine what portions of the great fabric of science are imperfect or defective, what portions invite our researches; in what sections exertion and attention are wanting, where they would be superfluous.

In these labours the lofty and aspiring mind of man delights to engage, whether stimulated by interest or curiosity, or excited by an ardent desire to look beyond himself, to understand the laws and arrangement of that system to which he finds himself connected, to converse with wisdom, to become familiar with the manifestations of power, to view with an eye of intelligence as well as admiration the unfailing exhibition of beauty, magnificence and order.

It is in employments and in moments like this that the mind seems to disfranchise itself from the shackles of its material frame, to disencumber itself from the dross of mortality, to feel the overshadowings and the inspirations of a loftier and a purer spirit. It is then that man pants to place the impress of greatness and duration, the seal of immortality on all that surrounds him; to incorporate himself with the scenes and events which pass along; to live, not for the present hour, but for the ages and generations that are to come. And however to the inert or the unfeeling, to the egotist or the sensualist, these aspirations may appear absurd or idle; such is the condition of our existence that nothing great, nothing worthy or breathing of immortality can be expected

from the individual or the nation whose views never soar beyond the wants, the desires, the enjoyments of the present moment. Man lives, more than he is aware of, for posterity. And often his greatest enjoyments are derived from the pursuit and accomplishment of those objects, which while they scatter blessings around the present generation, promise, perhaps ensure, benefits also to distant ages. He builds temples that a future race may worship; creates institutions where another age shall be instructed; frames laws and constitutions by which they shall be guided and protected; rears monuments that shall testify to them his triumphs and improvements. And posterity repays them with the tribute of respect and veneration, the undying name, the deep feeling of admiration which departed greatness always inspires. Even inanimate objects revive the strong impressions which the mind receives from the remembrance of the deeds of the ages that have passed away, as they testify to the power and the grandeur of the mighty who have fallen. Who can walk amidst the ruins of Egyptian Thebes, and not remember and feel even now the power and the magnificence of the race that erected her stupendous fabrics? Who can visit the mouldering ruins of Greece without recalling the visions of her greatness, the memory of her sages and her chiefs, the talents of those gifted men whose productions even now are the admiration of mankind? But who inquires where the Tartar or the Arab last pitched his tent? Who cares where the savage of the forest builds his occasional wigwam? It is thus that the memory and character of a country become identified with the intellectual powers and employments of her offspring. It is thus that our employments tinge with their complexion either for honour or dishonour, for glory or shame, the land of our nativity or the home of our adoption. All, therefore, who feel interested in the real and permanent glory of their country, should impress these feelings on contemporary generations. They should strive to rear up in all directions endu-

ring monuments of the civilization and improvement of their age, to manifest even to remote posterity that the footsteps of creative and enlightened man have rested also on our soil.

It is only when aspiring beyond his animal wants that the high endowments of man are truly unfolded. It is then that he can claim his relationship with the world of immaterial forms; that he can look forward to the great prize his Creator has prepared for him; and putting on the armour of immortal spirits, can struggle with the evil principles of selfish and worldly passions, and contend even with the great destroyer Time himself.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

Observations on education, on the importance, the dignity of intellectual acquirements must be addressed with propriety to you whose very profession leads you into the paths and pursuits of science. Your reputation, your success, your influence in society must depend on the cultivation of your intellectual powers. And every motive, personal or social, which can actuate great or aspiring minds, urge you to press forward ardently, honourably, unremittingly in your proud career. You are rising into life and may have the power of guiding public opinion, not only as professional but as public men. In our fortunate government every citizen, whatever may be his occupation, is not only invited, but almost compelled to mingle in our public councils. While, therefore, as private individuals you may give a bias or direction to the feelings and views of society, you may as public functionaries have opportunities of enforcing the value and necessity of public instruction, of promoting its diffusion, of enlarging its means, extending its limits, and of returning in a tenfold proportion to your descendants the advantages you have received from your progenitors.

You have been called into life in perhaps the most interesting period of human existence; an age distinguished by

the novelty, the variety, the splendor, the magnitude of its incidents, distinguished by the progress of liberal opinions, of moral and political truth, by the accelerated march of science, and by its deep influence on the fortunes of the human race. He who has lived through the last fifty years, has lived through times of unexampled vicissitudes, of unforeseen adventures, of unparalleled events. The fictions of romance, the dreams of fancy, have been surpassed and dimmed by the sober records of truth. Every thing considered sacred or imposing in society has been degraded and defaced; every thing considered stable has been overturned or endangered. Nations have been conquered and divided; kingdoms and empires have been dismembered, subverted and renewed; monarchs have been dethroned, restored, created, exiled, imprisoned and condemned to death; wars have been waged unequalled in the number, the discipline, the skill of the combatants; revolutions have occurred sudden, momentous, rational, wild, glorious or destructive; the fabric of society, its laws, its governments, its associations all destroyed, renovated, transformed, purified or disfigured. These events have passed before our eyes with the rapidity of optical illusion; they have agitated our feelings with the interest of reality. And still amidst these disturbed, disordered, enraged and contending elements, the human mind has been elevated and enlarged, and the progress of human improvement has been steady, rapid and consoling. We whose hairs are now frosted with age have seen, or felt, or heard these things. You are entering on the active scenes of life when these convulsed principles are subsiding into tranquillity, and some of you may yet aid in giving to the form of civilized society its permanent characters.

But it is more with literary and moral improvement than with political that you will be engaged. Your profession is an intellectual as well as practical pursuit. You will be untrue to your calling and to your characters if you neglect

your highest duties, and if when enrolled amidst the ranks of science you recoil from its claims, or shrink even from its painful requisitions. In this age of profound and varied attainments, it is no common toil, no desultory application, no irregular exertion that can acquire distinction. The foundations of education must be broad and deep, laboured with diligence and wrought with care. Brilliancy of talent, quickness of conception and combination may acquire for the young distinction, but only diligence persevering, unfaltering, unremitted can preserve and extend it. The day for factitious reputation has passed by. Genius may wear the crown which it has merited, but the crown must be won by great and meritorious services.

Of your peculiar duties as professional men it will remain for him who at the close of your studies will have the pleasure of addressing you, more particularly to speak. It is to students that these observations are directed. The human frame, its structure and the derangement of that structure, its organs and the functions of those organs will be your particular study. But man is not an isolated animal, he must be examined in relation to other beings and to the great system of nature. He is not only a physical but a moral and intellectual being, and his passions and his understanding as well as his muscles and nerves and bones must be the objects of your investigation. In all of his dependencies, in his connexions with material or immaterial systems his affinities should be traced. And the more extended shall be your views, the broader and deeper your generalizations, the more profound and accurate and the more worthy of confidence will be your conclusions.

It cannot be concealed, however unpleasantly it may sound, that the period appropriated to your professional education is too limited. The time allotted in this country to medical studies is scarcely sufficient for the successful acquisition of one branch of medical science even if devoted ex-

clusively to a single pursuit ; and the efficiency of this time is lessened by accumulating on each day studies diversified and in some measure incongruous. In our prosperous country we seem to imagine that enterprise can supersede the necessity of severe and long continued study, and that as the will to be free was supposed in the revolutionary doctrines of Europe to ensure freedom, the will to be learned and skilful will of itself generate both learning and skill. This arrangement however of your studies is not peculiar to us, it is the one uniformly adopted in the medical schools in the United States ; and an institution so young as this could not feel authorized to depart from what at present may be regarded as a national usage.

In the United States it may be considered as a common error that all are anxious to commence the career of life prematurely ; all feverishly solicitous to be bustling and acting and seeking for notoriety on the great theatre of public contention, without recollecting that victory in the race of human life is generally allotted, not to him who starts early, but to him who by diligence and exertion, by previous discipline and well directed exercise shall enter the course duly and appropriately trained.

In the best school of Europe in France four years of continued study are required from each medical student who aspires to a degree, each year divided into two courses of six months, allotted to different branches.* And five strict and public examinations, two of them in the Latin language, are undergone before a degree can be obtained. I mention these

* In the winter course are studied, 1. Anatomy and Phisiology ; 2. Medical Chemistry and Pharmacy ; 3. Operative Surgery ; 4. History of rare Cases and Medical Opinions. In the summer course, 1. Medical Natural History ; 2. The Doctrines of Health ; 3. Internal and External Pathology ; 4. Obstetrics ; 5. Medical Jurisprudence and the History of Medicine ; during the whole year the students attend daily Clinical Lectures on Medicine or Surgery.

facts to show the discipline to which students submit in foreign countries, and to show how those are trained, with whom you will have to contend, not perhaps in your domestic circle, not in the local districts in which you may be called to practice, but on the theatre of the great world whenever you may be induced to appear in the character of men of science, and assume the rank of instructors. I mention these facts because I know the time will come when you yourselves will regret the short term of your elementary studies, and will feel the difficulty of retaining those principles which here you will have imperfectly acquired.

But it is in your power to remedy these disadvantages, and if enterprize alone cannot conquer impossibilities, diligence and perseverance can surmount almost every difficulty. Consider your studies here not as the completion but as the commencement of your professional course; as only unfolding to your view the great outlines of medical science. Pursue zealously in your private hours, in the years that are to come, the acquirements of which only the foundations may now be laid. In moments of leisure, let them not be moments of idleness, retrace the principles, examine the opinions which you may here be taught, and renew the impressions which you may find fading from your memory. Remember that your profession has sacred claims on your time and on your exertions; that your country has a right to demand from you, not the mere acquisition and possession of an honorary degree, but the attention, the diligence, the scientific attainments which give to the character of a physician respectability and dignity, and to his employments permanent and extended usefulness.

Devote then your labours to these great designs. If nature in the distribution of talents has been indulgent to you, repay her kindness with gratitude—if your country has showered down benefits on you, has opened your career to wealth,

to usefulness, to reputation, bring to her service a zeal untiring, fervent and sincere ; honour that will feel even reproach as a wound ; principles that will not bend or waver under the influence of worldly or unworthy motives ; and let your efforts be directed to promote her prosperity, to advance her real greatness, to shed around her that undying blaze of glory which the talents, the virtues, the unconquerable principles of offspring will enkindle around the name, the fortunes, and the character of a nation.

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